

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY

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SUBJECT: LATIN AMERICANS AT THE COLOMBO SUMMIT: MOSTLY
SPECTATORS

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF INR REPORT NO. 558, "LATIN AMERICANS AT THE COLOMBO SUMMIT: MOSTLY SPECTATORS," DATED AUGUST 12, 1976.

2. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE INTEREST OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM) EVIDENT AT LAST YEAR'S SESSIONS IN LIMA HAS DECLINED, AND MOST MEMBER AND OBSERVER COUNTRIES ARE SENDING RELATIVELY LOW-LEVEL DELEGATIONS TO COLOMBO FOR THE UPCOMING SUMMIT MEETING, AUGUST 16-19. APART FROM PANAMA, WHICH SEEKS A NON-SECRET

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ALIGNED CONSENSUS TO BUTTRESS WORLD SUPPORT FOR A SATISFACTORY CANAL TREATY, AND CUBA, WHICH USES THE NON-ALIGNED SESSIONS AS AN IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL FORUM, THE LATINS

(A)--HAVE FEW EXPECTATIONS OF GAINING ANYTHING USEFUL;

(B)--WILL LARGELY STAY ON THE SIDELINES AT THE COLOMBO MEETING; AND

(C)--SEEM TO BE REVERTING TO THE TRADITIONAL AMBIVALENT AND PASSIVE STANCE WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE THIRD WORLD GROUP SINCE ITS INCEPTION.

3. THE LATINS' LOW-KEY APPROACH TO THE NAM CONFERENCE DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY WILL COME DOWN POSITIVELY ON THE US SIDE ON TWO ISSUES OF PRIME US CONCERN: PUERTO RICO AND KOREA. THE NAM DOES NOT VOTE BY COUNTRY IN ITS CONFERENCES, AND THE LATINS--WHO MIGHT ABSTAIN IF VOTING INDIVIDUALLY--WILL PROBABLY JUST DRIFT UNCOMFORTABLY WITH THE GROUP CONSENSUS ON THESE ISSUES, STRIVING AT BEST TO MODERATE LANGUAGE AND BLUNT RADICAL PROPOSALS. END SUMMARY

4. PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE:

5. THE VACUUM CREATED BY LATIN DISINTEREST HAS BEEN FILLED BY AN AGGRESSIVE AND WELL-ORGANIZED CUBAN EFFORT, TAKING AIM--DURING NAM SESSIONS OVER THE YEARS--AT US POSITIONS AND INTERESTS AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE. THOUGH MANY LATIN COUNTRIES DO NOT AGREE WITH CUBA ON THIS ISSUE, THEY HAVE DIFFICULTY OPENLY APPEARING TO AGREE WITH THE US POSITION. LAST YEAR IN LIMA, THE LATIN MEMBERS TOOK A HANDS-OFF ATTITUDE, PARTICULARLY IRRITATING TO THE US IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT PUERTO RICO IS OSTENSIBLY A REGIONAL ISSUE. NAM MEMBERS FROM OTHER REGIONS HAVE PROFESSED TO SEE SUCH INACTION AS AN ENDORSEMENT OF CUBAN CHARGES AND HAVE THEREFORE ACCEPTED ANTI-US DECLARATIONS ON PUERTO RICO IN EXCHANGE FOR FAVORABLE LATIN ENDORSEMENT OF THEIR OWN REGIONAL ISSUES.

6. THE KOREAN ISSUE:

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7. SIMILARLY ON KOREA, WHICH THE US RANKS AS AN ISSUE OF CONCERN SECOND ONLY TO PUERTO RICO IN THE NON-ALIGNED FORUM, THE LATINS MAY "GO ALONG" WITH THE MAJORITY NAM DECLARATION, LIKELY TO CALL FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS, CLOSURE OF FOREIGN MILITARY BASES, TERMINATION OF THE UN COMMAND, AND POLITICAL UNIFICATION OF NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA. THE KOREAN PROBLEM MEANS LITTLE OR NOTHING TO MOST LATIN NAM MEMBERS.

8. COUNTRY POSITIONS:

9. THE SIX LATIN COUNTRIES--OTHER THAN CUBA--WHICH BELONG TO THE NON-ALIGNED (ARGENTINA, GUYANA, JAMAICA, PANAMA,

PERU, AND TRINIDAD) AND THE THREE KEY LATIN OBSERVER COUNTRIES WILL NEITHER CONTRIBUTE MUCH DIRECTLY NOR RECEIVE

(EXCEPT FOR PANAMA) MUCH OF SIGNIFICANT UTILITY TO THEM. THEIR ENTHUSIASM FOR "THIRD WORLDING" SEEMS LIKELY TO BE DILUTED BY:

(A)--RESERVATIONS OVER CUBA'S RADICALISM, AND

(B)--THE REALIZATION THAT BEING IDENTIFIED WITH NAM POSITIONS ON CERTAIN ISSUES CAN BE AN IRRITANT IN THEIR LARGER RELATIONSHIPS, PARTICULARLY WITH THE UNITED STATES.

10. ARGENTINA. AT COLOMBO, THE ARGENTINE DELEGATION--LED BY THE AMBASSADOR TO INDIA--WILL SIMPLY KEEP QUIET DESPITE A PROBABLY NEGATIVE GUT REACTION TO THE MARXIST AND LEFTIST PHILOSOPHIES OF MANY OF THE ACTIVIST MEMBERS. THE NEW REGIME IS PROBABLY EMBARRASSED BY ITS MEMBERSHIP IN THE NONALIGNED, WHICH THE COUNTRY JOINED IN 1973 AS A REFLECTION OF THE LATE JUAN PERON'S DETERMINATION TO VAULT ARGENTINA INTO THIRD WORLD PROMINENCE. THE ARGENTINES WILL, HOWEVER, WELCOME THE USUAL SUPPORTIVE PARAGRAPH IN THE FINAL DECLARATION ON THEIR DISPUTE WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM OVER THE MALVINAS/FALKLANDS ISLANDS.

11. ARGENTINA IS NOT EXPECTED TO TAKE A PUBLIC POSITION SEPARATING ITSELF FROM THE NAM CONSENSUS ON KOREA OR
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PUERTO RICO, DESPITE THE FACT THAT ARGENTINE OFFICIALS HAVE ASSURED THE UNITED STATES THAT THE GOVERNMENT:

(A)--BELIEVES THE QUESTION WAS SETTLED WITH UN ACTION TO REMOVE PUERTO RICO FROM THE COLONIAL AGENDA; AND

(B)--WILL NOT SUPPORT AN ANTI-US RESOLUTION AT COLOMBO.

12. CHILE. ALLENDE'S CHILE JOINED THE NON-ALIGNED IN 1971, BUT THE PRESENT CHILEAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT CONSIDER ITSELF AN "ACTIVE" NON-ALIGNED MEMBER AND WILL NOT ATTEND THE COLOMBO MEETING. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT A CHILEAN "LIBERATION MOVEMENT" WILL BE GIVEN OBSERVER STATUS.

13. GUYANA. PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM WILL HEAD HIS COUNTRY'S DELEGATION TO THE SUMMIT. IN HIS SPEECH, HE IS EXPECTED TO CONDEMN THE "DESTABILIZATION" OF CARIBBEAN GOVERNMENTS BY OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION. HE WILL NOT EXPLICITLY NAME THE US OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY. HIS CHARGES--WIDELY CIRCULATED IN THE CARIBBEAN FOR SOME MONTHS--WERE ENDORSED IN JUNE AT THE PREPARATORY MEETING (IN ALGIERS) FOR THE SUMMIT AND ARE LIKELY TO APPEAR IN THE FINAL COLOMBO DECLARATION. BURNHAM IS GOING TO COLOMBO, IN

LARGE MEASURE, TO OBTAIN INTERNATIONAL BACKING FOR THE DESTABILIZATION THEORY, WHICH HE CAN THEN POINT TO

DOMESTICALLY--IF NEED BE--AS PROOF OF THE VALIDITY OF THE CHARGE.

14. ON THE KOREAN ISSUE, GUYANESE OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD EMBASSY GEORGETOWN THAT GUYANA WILL INSIST THAT ANY RESOLUTION INCLUDE SOUTH KOREA IN DISCUSSIONS AIMED TOWARD A SETTLEMENT OF THE ISSUE.

15. ON PUERTO RICO, GUYANESE FOREIGN MINISTER WILLS CLAIMS THAT GUYANA:

(A)--ACCEPTS THE US POSITION THAT THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE HAVE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THEIR DESIRE TO RETAIN TIES WITH THE US;

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(B)--WILL CHANGE THIS POSITION ONLY IF SHOWN THAT SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT EXISTS ON THE ISLAND FOR INDEPENDENCE (THE GUYANESE AMBASSADOR TO THE US, WHO RECENTLY VISITED PUERTO RICO, TOLD WILLS THERE IS ALMOST NONE); AND

(C)--WILL RECOMMEND THAT THE SUMMIT PASS NO RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO.

NEVERTHELESS, GUYANA IS PROBABLY UNDER PRESSURE TO SHOW INCREASING SUPPORT FOR THE CUBAN PUSH ON PUERTO RICO AS A QUID PRO QUO FOR RECENT CUBAN ASSISTANCE.

16. JAMAICA. PLEADING EMERGENCY CONDITIONS WHICH REQUIRE HIM TO STAY HOME, PRIME MINISTER MANLEY IS SENDING FOREIGN MINISTER DUDLEY THOMPSON TO COLOMBO. JAMAICA JOINED THE NON-ALIGNED IN 1969 AND RELIES HEAVILY ON ITS IMAGE AS A THIRD WORLDER. LIKE GUYANA, IT SHARES A NATURAL AFFINITY WITH THE AFRICAN MEMBERS, WHICH WERE ALSO FORMER BRITISH COLONIES AND ARE NOW MEMBERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH, AND WHOSE LARGE NUMBERS GIVE THEM A SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE IN NAM MEETINGS.

17. ON KOREA AND PUERTO RICO THE JAMAICAN PUBLIC STANCE HAS BEEN UP TO NOW ONE OF NEUTRALITY AND ABSTENTION. RECENT STRAINS IN THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, DERIVING FROM JAMAICAN ALLEGATIONS THAT THE US IS DESTABILIZING JAMAICA, COULD CAUSE JAMAICA TO ALTER ITS POSITION ON THESE ISSUES, ALTHOUGH REGARDING PUERTO RICO, THOMPSON STATED IN MARCH: "JAMAICA WILL NOT BACK A PUERTO RICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT. THIS IS AN IMMUTABLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OURSELVES AND OUR GOOD FRIENDS THE CUBANS."

18. PANAMA. CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT TORRIJOS WILL ATTEND THE COLOMBO MEETING TO OBTAIN A SOLID COMMITMENT OF SUPPORT ON

THE CANAL ISSUE. HE WILL LIKELY HAVE A FREE HAND IN DETERMINING THE NON-ALIGNED POSITION, AND HE REALIZES THAT A NON-ALIGNED CONSENSUS WILL FEED INTO THE POSITION SUPPORTED BY NAM COUNTRIES THIS FALL AT THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

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19. A GENERAL DECLARATION SIMILAR TO THE ONE ADOPTED AT LIMA LAST YEAR WOULD NOT BE EXTREMELY TROUBLING TO THE UNITED STATES, BUT IT MIGHT BE VIEWED IN PANAMA AS "NOTHING NEW" AND COULD FUEL TORRIJOS' DOMESTIC OPPOSITION, WHICH IS DISSATISFIED WITH THE PACE OF TREATY NEGOTIATIONS. TORRIJOS COULD OPT AT COLOMBO FOR A MORE AGGRESSIVE AND EXPLICIT NON-ALIGNED STAND SUPPORTING PANAMA ON ALL THE QUESTIONS STILL AT ISSUE--PARTICULARLY AN END TO THE NEW TREATY BY THE YEAR 2000. IF TORRIJOS APPEARS INCLINED TO TAKE THIS OPTION, ONE OR TWO OF THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES PRESENT AT COLOMBO MAY URGE HIM TO SOFTEN HIS STAND.

20. ON BOTH KOREA AND PUERTO RICO, PANAMA WILL GO ALONG WITH THE SUMMIT CONSENSUS--WHATEVER IT IS--TO ENSURE NON-ALIGNED SOLIDARITY ON THE ONLY ISSUE WHICH REALLY MATTERS TO PANAMA.

21. PERU. THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT HAS, ALMOST APOLOGETICALLY, ANNOUNCED THAT ITS DELEGATION WILL BE HEADED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER RATHER THAN A HIGHER LEVEL OFFICIAL. THE APOLOGY IS NOT SURPRISING IN THAT PERU HAS HERETOFORE BEEN AN ACTIVE AND RESPECTED MEMBER OF THE NON-ALIGNED AND HAS EXERCISED AN IMPORTANT LEADERSHIP ROLE IN KEEPING WITH FORMER PRESIDENT VELASCO'S OWN IDEOLOGY OF ECONOMIC NATIONALISM AND ATTACKS ON TRADITIONAL CAPITALISM WHICH HE BOLSTERED BY STRESSING PERU'S INTERNATIONAL NON-ALIGNMENT.

22. SUBSEQUENT CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT AND SERIOUS DOMESTIC FINANCIAL TROUBLES SEEM TO HAVE SAPPED PERU'S WILL TO EXCEL IN THE NAM, ALTHOUGH LIPSERVICE IS STILL PAID TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GROUP. GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS INDICATE A NEW EMPHASIS ON HEMISPHERIC RELATIONS AND HAVE LED TO SPECULATION THAT THERE MAY BE A CORRESPONDING DECREASE IN THIRD WORLD INTERESTS. THE IMPORTANCE TO PERU OF OBTAINING NEW INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE MAKES THE GOVERNMENT HESITATE TO APPEAR RADICAL.

23. THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER IS THOUGHT TO BE BETTER DISPOSED TOWARD SOUTH KOREA THAN HIS PREDECESSOR WAS, BUT NO FAVORABLE SHIFT CAN BE EXPECTED BY THE TIME OF THE COLOMBO SUMMIT. REGARDING PUERTO RICO, THE PERUVIANS HAVE TOLD

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US OFFICIALS NOTHING MORE THAN THAT THEY UNDERSTAND "US SENSITIVITY" ON THE ISSUE AND WILL TRY TO BE A MODERATING FORCE.

24. TRINIDAD. TRINIDAD WILL BE REPRESENTED AT COLOMBO BY ITS PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN. TRINIDAD WILL NOT BECOME INVOLVED IN THE "DESTABILIZATION" CHARGES OF ITS CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY PARTNERS. IT WILL ALSO STAY ALOOF ON THE PUERTO RICAN AND KOREAN ISSUES. TRINIDAD'S PUERTO RICAN STAND REFLECTS THE PERSONAL VIEWS OF PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS, A WELL-KNOWN AUTHORITY ON CARIBBEAN HISTORY. HE TOLD PUERTO RICAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, ATTEMPTING TO BRIEF HIM ON THE US POSITION DURING TRADE TALKS IN MARCH, THAT HE WAS "FULLY AWARE OF THE SITUATION IN PUERTO RICO" AND NEEDED "NO EDUCATION ON THAT SUBJECT FROM THE CUBANS OR ANYONE ELSE." HE IS KNOWN TO BELIEVE PUERTO RICO SHOULD OPT FOR INDEPENDENCE, BUT--ACCEPTING THE DE FACTO SITUATION--HAS WORKED HARD TO FORGE LINKS BETWEEN PUERTO RICO AND THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY.

25. BRAZIL. BRAZIL'S OBSERVER DELEGATION WILL REPORTEDLY CONSIST OF TWO MIDDLE-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. BRAZILIAN OFFICIALS HAVE WARNED THAT BRAZIL CANNOT INFLUENCE WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT COLOMBO, BUT THEY ALSO ADMITTED TO US OFFICIALS THAT THE CUBANS SUCCEED SO EASILY IN MANIPULATING NON-ALIGNED FORUMS PARTLY BECAUSE THE OTHER LATIN AMERICANS REMAIN SILENT.

26. ON THE KOREAN ISSUE, BRAZIL HAS NOT BEEN REASSURING TO THE UNITED STATES. ON PUERTO RICO, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S UN DIVISION CHIEF TOLD A US EMBASSY OFFICER THAT FEW INTERNATIONAL ISSUES "COULD BE AS CLEAR," BUT HE STIPULATED THAT HE COULD NOT COMMIT HIS GOVERNMENT ON THIS QUESTION. MORE RECENTLY THE FOREIGN MINISTER STATED THAT BRAZIL WOULD NOT SUPPORT PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE.

27. MEXICO. THE FACT THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY GARCIA ROBLES WILL LEAD HIS COUNTRY'S OBSERVER DELEGATION TO COLOMBO IS INDICATIVE OF A NEW MEXICAN ACTIVISM AMONG THE NON-ALIGNED TO SUPPORT PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S CAMPAIGN TO REPLACE UN
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SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM. MEXICO SEEMS TO DESIRE GREATER IDENTIFICATION AS A THIRD WORLD LEADER WITHOUT GOING SO FAR AS TO JOIN THE NON-ALIGNED.

28. US OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT MEXICO'S ROLE AT

COLOMBO WILL BE PASSIVE. ON PUERTO RICO AND KOREA, MEXICAN OFFICIALS HAVE PROMISED ONLY "TO TAKE NOTE" OF THE US POSITION.

29. VENEZUELA. VENEZUELA'S OBSERVER DELEGATION AT COLOMBO WILL BE HEADED BY INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS MINISTER PEREZ-GUERRERO, WHO IS ALSO CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (CIEC). HIS ATTENDANCE UNDERLINES VENEZUELA'S INTEREST IN THE ECONOMIC ISSUES AT COLOMBO.

30. VENEZUELA WILL BE SYMPATHETIC TO SOUTH KOREA AND WILL PERHAPS DO SOME LOBBYING TO MODERATE AN EXTREME KOREAN DECLARATION. VENEZUELA--IF ASKED--WILL TAKE A POSITIVE STANCE TOWARD THE CURRENT PUERTO RICAN GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF LONGSTANDING AND CLOSE TIES BETWEEN VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT PEREZ AND GOVERNOR HERNANDEZ COLON AND HIS PARTY IN PUERTO RICO. PEREZ TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE IN MARCH THAT UNTIL THE PUERTO RICANS THEMSELVES ARE INTERESTED IN SEVERING THEIR TIES TO THE US AND ARE PREVENTED FROM DOING SO, PUERTO RICO CANNOT BE CONSIDERED A COLONY. END TEXT. ROBINSON

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